

Accepted by the Graduate Faculty, Indiana University,  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree of Master of Liberal Arts.

**A Vane Affair:  
In Search of Dorothy L. Sayers**

Masters Committee

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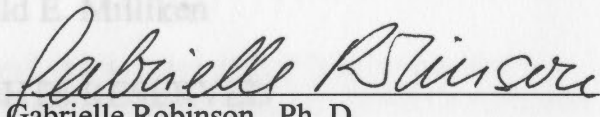
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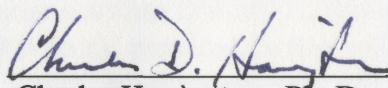
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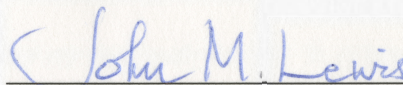
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## Acknowledgements

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## Preface

This work grew from research into the life and letters of the renowned British author, Dorothy L. Sayers. The research focused on reviewing Sayers' life and works with particular attention to her decision to abandon her successful, formulaic mystery writing career for religious devotion and a return to academic translations. This author believes that Sayers left distinct messages in her form-breaking work *Gaudy Night* to alert her followers and beforehand silence her critics, and that these messages are not surprising but clearly foreshadowed in Sayers' life.

The following work would not have been written without the gracious and enthusiastic encouragement of my Committee Chairperson, Dr. Gabrielle Robinson. Her recognition of the potential to make this thesis from its humble beginnings is the foundation of its existence. Along the way, guidance from faculty members Charles Harrington, John Lewis, Frances Sherwood, and Patrick Furlong moved the work to this final stage. The Indiana University inter-library loan system was fundamental in accessing most of the resources on Dorothy L. Sayers. Occasional emails with her biographer, Barbara Reynolds, provided further reflection beyond the vast volume of D.L.S. letters and works. Most importantly and ardently I wish to express by deepest gratitude to my wife, Christine, without whose forbearance all of my Masters work and most importantly this project would not have been possible.

but rather relies upon form parallels, plot devices, and imagery to evoke a desire to contemplate the author's intention concerning *Gaudy Night*. It is hoped that a running irony is created through the intermingling of fictitious characters from Sayers' works with actual (though in this work fictitious) personages. No character in this work is in anyway intended to represent any actual person living or dead or any actual action of DLS herself. Instead, the mere imagery of a time and place are to be evoked through these fictitious characterizations.



## Preface

This work grew from research into the life and letters of the renowned British author, Dorothy L. Sayers. The research focused on reviewing Sayers' life and works with particular attention to her decision to abandon her successful, formulaic mystery writing career for religious, theatrical writing and a return to academic translations. This author believes that Sayers left distinct messages in her form breaking work *Gaudy Night* to alert her followers and beforehand silence her critics, and that these messages are not surprising but clearly foreshadowed in Sayers' life and personal letters. Given that understanding, this author chose to allow *Gaudy Night* to stand upon its own, rather than to add to the existing abundance of critical essays which surely would annoy Dorothy L. Sayers were she alive today. Instead, this author elected to point the way to understanding through a more whimsical approach.

The following novella in no manner attempts to mirror the writing style of DLS but rather relies upon form parallels, plot devices, and imagery to evoke a desire to contemplate the author's intention concerning *Gaudy Night*. It is hoped that a running irony is created through the intermingling of fictitious characters from Sayers' works with actual (though in this work fictitious) personages. No character in this work is in anyway intended to represent any actual person living or dead or any actual action of DLS herself. Instead, the mere imagery of a time and place are to be evoked through these fictitious characterizations.

## Chapter 1

Male readers would probably not be interested in a bunch of middle-aged academic women, and would find Harriet unattractive. I rather agreed with them, but thought there was one chance in a million that the thing might come off.<sup>1</sup>

Slicing my way through a foggy, November, London cloud and a city center throng to Rafferty's Pub, I mused about what madness made me think this misty matriarch would be a fascinating place or even a change from the damp, cloudy days of doom and gloom in Lydick, Indiana. Like so many other young artists, who went to the Continent to soak in the culture of Paris, Berlin, Vienna, Rome, or Venice, I found myself on the last bead of that string of pearls figuratively gazing across the oceanic hasp that led to the beginning back home. We came from different places for supposedly different reasons, but once we ended up in London, we all shared the common ground of being broke, beleaguered, and most of all burnt out. We had led the fast life and in exchange we reaped the benefits of the speed; by our 30's we reached the defining moment of middle age: the realization that we would not achieve the lofty goals of our recently youthful dreams. We became cynically aged before our time. Thus, making the last leg of the journey home, an apparent return in defeat, became an insurmountable task. So we perched in



London, faltering in making the leap across the hasp that linked our disappointing present to our discouraging past.

At the close of '38, with the international depression barely behind, and a world wide one of a different kind just ahead, it seemed as if at the end of every day every soul in London was surging to the late afternoon sanctity of Rafferty's or some other haven for the home weary. Having a writer like Thomas Wolfe hang his hat made Rafferty's famous, I just made the place profitable. With no more than a hot plate in the office that I illegally used as a home, 'Rafferty' (the original died "before the war" - no one said which one) cooked my meals, ladled out my libations, and too frequently provided me a chance for a sponge bath. Had the other patrons been much better, I myself would have been considered the sponge. All in all, I spent more time at Rafferty's than at my office. The warm, walnut-paneled room with the polished brass, etched glass, and mirror-backed alcoves became the womb from which it could have been said that I occasionally *escaped* rather than retreated to.

On entering, I exchanged a damp, dewy cloud for a dry, smoky one. In the diffused light, I made my way back along the right hand wall just beyond the feathering light from the bar on the opposite side. The heavy tables and tall-backed chairs in the mist between stood as sentinels against the yakkers and jabbers at the bar who daily told the same stories of the Murphy twins or times back home. The Welsh, Irish, and Yanks (the Scots never showed) all claimed sections of both the room and the bar proper. As the crowd swelled and ebbed, so did their territorial gains and influence. The Welsh, lacking in numbers, generally compensated with endurance; they came early, stayed late, and nursed their drinks like they were



sucking hind teat. I chose to stay above the fray, or at least out of sight, and fit in nowhere. Most of the Yanks were twice displaced Irish and with their County Cork/South Boston accents fit in well. I could carry the brogue like a Kerry County cleric but it was only mimicry. My Mulligans had left Sligo nearly 200 years before and couldn't have found their home sod on a map, let alone pronounce it properly. As I slid into my customary alcove behind a small but thick, circular table, it seemed the worn bench cushion rose prophetically up to meet my rear. As I customarily raised my hand to signal my usual pint of Smithwick's, Teddy, the barkeep, called across the way: "Bobby. Bobby Mulligan. Yea got yerself a caller."

Before I could respond, a figure stepped out of the smoky shadows to my right and blocked the diminishing light from the bar and my view of the hailing Teddy. From the silhouette of the trench coat clad figure came a voice more feminine than its shape implied. She was no frail Irish waif looking for an easy touch, and yet she sounded far from the towering washerwoman figure her silhouette at first portrayed. Big-boned is what these English gals like to call it. As a Mid-Westerner I was sympathetic, but generally not favorable to the form. She extended her hand gracefully, "Bobby Mulligan? I was told I could find you here. Allow me to introduce myself, I'm Harriet Wimsey."

"Please have a seat, Miss Wimsey."

She sat down proper, right where she stood at the edge of the table between me and the bar, rather than moving to the left or right and ending up closer to my side.

Though just beyond arms length, her face was still in shadow and a thin veil hung

from the small black cap perched askance her head. No less comic than her appearance, the question begged to be asked: "Are you in mourning, Miss Wimsey?"

Coldly she retorted, "So much around me has died lately, I've become accustomed to this dress. And it's Mrs. Wimsey. Mrs. Peter Wimsey."

"How may I help you, ma'am?"

"I want you to find my husband. I believe he may have left me for another woman," she replied with more feeling and less volume.

"I see, and how long has he been gone?"

"Almost a fortnight ago, since the first weekend of the month."

"And you suspect another woman. Why?"

She shifted more in her shoulders than in her hips and haltingly replied, "Scraps of paper. I mean, just scraps of papers I found in the den hearth." She fumbled with her purse snap, produced an envelope, and jerkily pulled out one bit of charred paper after another and laid them on the table before me. As I looked them over I pondered the many insecurities that might cause a woman to go through the ashes in her husband's den hearth but held my questions in reserve. She felt no compulsion to fill the silence as I hoped. Some of the scraps had been pasted together with one of the edges lined up but still missing some words or having complete phrases obviously charred beyond recovery. What troubled thoughts must have filled in those meaningless blanks. I saw what she might imagine as I perused one fragment after another:



Nobody can feel more acutely than I do the unsatisfactoriness of my financial position... If you like I'll make a sporting offer – that if you can manage to help me to “keep going” until -----, then, ----- Peter----- I will chuck the whole thing, confess myself -----

Only one fragment had any worthwhile bit of information, the name *Katherine Lammas*. I pushed back from the table I had been squinting over and gazed at my mysterious caller. “Do you know this Katherine Lammas?”

“I never heard the name before in my life. Can you help me?”

I was certain I could find out about Katherine Lammas, and probably where her hubby was and why; but I wasn't certain that would help her. I tried to study the now barely appearing chubby face behind the veil and penetrate the folds of her trench coat for hints of what lay beneath the surface, but it was as useless a task as divining the truth from the charred notes with the blackened edges. I wondered about her motives for obscuring herself; it gave me caution. There was something false about Mrs. Wimsey and I was just perverse enough and just broke enough to want to find out what it was.

“One thing I must know first, Mrs. Wimsey. Why did you pick me, a Yank gumshoe who lives out of a third rate office, when better known and respected agencies are easily within your means?”

“It is true that well-established English concerns are available, but your personal background and American manners suit my circumstances quite well.”

“And just what are these circumstances? And for that matter, what do you know about my personal background?” I rather brusquely replied.



Without a twitch or so much of a hint of reaction she replied: "It's astounding how a Guinness or two will wag the tongues of your compatriots."

Glancing at the chumps at the bar, I came back with "The tongues of these wags might be slobbering nonsense for all you know. As to the Guinness, they say 'It's good for you and two can do' so what do you think you have learned from these dolts?"

"You come from a small town in the Midwest where you felt intellectually cramped. You graduated from the University with honors in Germanic languages and had spent several years trying unsuccessfully to get your translations published. Too young to understand the depths of the war, you romanticized it and went to work for the U.S. government to escape your failure as a writer. You were an instructor at West Point and were selected to help form their first Intelligence Corps. During the depression you became disillusioned with your government and like so many of your countrymen sulked off to Europe to restore your artistic dreams, but instead you languish here in London as a pseudo-citizen finding it necessary to rely on your government training and connections to subsist." She barely paused, "It must grate you to play the role strictly for financial reasons."

The chubby face for once let slip its façade of calm and a mischievous Leonardo smile slipped out.

"You left out the part about my aged parents giving me a cynical disposition and my older brother being killed in the war. Oh, and I might have let out at one time, that I shot my dog when it was too sick to be cured." I retorted biting. This time she flinched a bit and softly replied:

"Excuse me for getting carried away. I can't help myself at times. It is something from *my* childhood and from which I have been trying to rid myself ever since."<sup>iii</sup>

"Let's just drop it." I countered. I was ready to put this farce behind me and hope for a simpler case of abandonment or missing property. They were my kind of cases: simple, short, and profitable. She sensed my mood and stiffened.

"I need *you* to find my husband. An English agent won't do. They will be too close to the problem and your government connections are important. Peter works for the Foreign Office and I believe I can trust you."

She baited me with that word *trust* and it was only later that I realized she had played me like Heifetz played Carnegie Hall. She understood me even better than her practiced little monologue revealed. But then I was only thinking about the chance to make some money and to put some life into the dreary November fog. She was well-dressed which meant a good fee and if hubby was with the Foreign Office it would be a lark to see what he was up to and tap her accordingly for my renowned discretion. A Smithwick's later, I had a sketchy outline, an envelope of charred letters, the promise of some papers concerning her husband's family, and a £500 advance.

She and Peter, her husband, lived in Sussex at an estate called the Talboys. He worked for the Foreign Office traveling a lot and frequently was unreachable. She was amazingly unconcerned about the details of his work as though until now she had never really cared to investigate the details of his personal life. They had been married just under three years, a marriage which she implied was arranged or



contrived by a mutual female acquaintance. She alluded to misgivings, not due to fears of romance as much as rivalry with her partner. She had given up her academic career translating French epics (which she explained endeared me to her as an understanding soul) in order to play the role of dutiful wife. There was a subtle bitterness which came through that pointed towards a troubled and painful choice that she now wished she never would have had to make, or perhaps have had made for her. Her manner and melancholy nature gave me the sense that it wasn't just this one recent choice but perhaps a whole string of choices that went back to some common decision she regretted.

When I tried to go back before the marriage and get more details on her past she cut me off. Rising effortlessly back into the smoky cloud, she said she would meet me the following week at the same time again at Rafferty's. We could have no contact in between and I was to divulge nothing until then. As abruptly as she originally blocked the light, she moved aside smartly when she stood up and let it stream back into my eyes; when they recovered she was gone.



## Chapter 2

Without this manuscript it would be forgivable, but wrong, to judge her solely on the level of an arrogant, somewhat brash personality, given to displays of monumental insensitivity.<sup>iii</sup>

I spent most of the next morning exploring different ways to run into dead ends in tracing down Katherine Lammas. I checked out all the usual records and found that references to *Lammas* were non-existent. Calls to the halls of records in Sussex and most of the small towns surrounding it were also fruitless. I had thought she might just be someone Wimsey ran into locally. Just about everyone wanted to know if I was sure about the name, it sounding so Spanish. She must be quite a character, I imagined, to live so completely out of sight. If Harriet Wimsey hadn't expressed such emotion when I said the name Katherine Lammas, I would have considered her as my second potential red herring, the first being the notes from the fire grate. But there was something there, in fact, her denial that she had never heard the name before had come across as something between evasion and a lie. Discovering the real relationship between Katherine and Peter would probably reveal something about Harriet herself, I concluded. Considering the way these things often work out, I imagined that Lammas might be considerably younger than

Harriet and that, along with the possibility that she might be a recent entrant to the country, could account for her anonymity. In fact, with Peter Wimsey's constant travel for the Foreign Office, there was no reason to believe that Katherine Lammas was ever in England. Wimsey could be having a dalliance anywhere on the Continent. His Foreign Office twist was complicating things and it appeared as though I would have to call in some markers with my contacts at the embassy. But first I had to explore all of the possibilities. I couldn't go to the well too many times without doing something in return, something usually quite unsavory, I didn't relish the thought of a repeat of that last trip out of Warsaw.

I dropped by the office just before lunch to see if Gwen was awake, asleep, or eating cheap chocolates and reading romance stories, as more often than not was the case. I couldn't blame her, hell, I hardly could pay her. Considering the miserly salary and the lack of business, what else should she do. I thought she deserved better, but she thought only about some day marrying Prince Charming and escaping the lousy side of London. So she lived with her parents, read novels between phone calls, and clung to the job (that barely paid for lunches and movies) like a wet leaf clings to your arse. She was only 22 and considering what was to come she probably made a good use of her life.

The office itself wasn't much of a treat either. It was a two-roomer on the third floor of a side street bread shop, a half dozen blocks from Rafferty's (its only feature of value). An Indian, who ran an import business, held the better second story office. On hot summer days, the smell of curry seeped through the floorboards when he opened his windows wide to let in the rare London heat, which must have



kindled thoughts of the homeland in the importer's mind. The windows of my inner sanctum were never opened, nor cleaned for that matter, on the Eastern philosophy that "this too shall pass."

My desk ran perpendicular to the windows and was set back a bit from the door facing them. Not far behind the desk was an old leather couch against the right hand wall. This location afforded me the comfort of placing my left hand on the corner edge of the desk and my right hand on the back of my chair before launching myself face first into the dry, cracked, leather cushions (without having to turn on a light) when I stumbled in from a long night at Rafferty's. However, to the observant client, my layout suggested quick access to exit the inner office in pursuit of any miscreant fleeing towards the outer door. What they made of the greasy hotplate, stained teapot, and unwashed teacup on the small table without any chairs on the left side of the room was never mentioned. Two rickety, straight-backed chairs stood across from the door and in front of the desk. Beyond that the room was faceless: no pictures, no posters, and no adornments of any kind. I had no illusions and didn't want to give any.

Gwen rarely let me down. Sure enough her little, sandy-brown head was lopped over a book as I entered the office.

"What's the situation today, Gwen, is Heathcliff still acting insufferable?"

"Wawt? Oo's Eathclip?"

"Never mind, I just stopped by to clean up a bit. Have there been any calls?"



"Gwan, yer a real kidder yea are. But believe it or not ye've a pawcel delivered dis mawnin." She handed me a small notebook sized parcel wrapped in fresh, plain brown paper straight from the bookstore not re-used from the bakery or butcher's.

"Who delivered it?" I asked.

"A lit-tell tyke. Luked like a Bakers Street Irregular."

"A what? Never mind. Did he say who it was from or where?"

"Naw, e didn't know. Sayed a rich laidy on the street gave im a tupence to run it up."

"Alright, carry on." I said as I passed through the door to my inner office while unwrapping the paper.

It was a small book of about 30 pages. The title was *Papers relating to the Family of Wimsey*.<sup>iv</sup> It was a genealogical background and with two exceptions it looked as boring as one would expect. The first was a rather unflattering drawing of the family patriarch depicting a nasty scowl. The second was an absurd coat of arms with a cat sitting crouch style above the shield (in place of the standard lion) and a plain field with three mice rampant, below a banner read: As My Whimsey Takes Me. Upon reflection, considering the inbreeding and history of cruelty in some royal families, the scowling figure may have actually been properly if not flatteringly represented. The coat of arms, however, seemed too childish not to be mocking. And yet, in all other aspects, binding, print quality, and composition, the publication was professional and not some cheap, homemade rag thrown together for my amusement. I decided to put Katherine Lammas aside for the time being and move on to Peter Wimsey.

I would start with the lead given me, Matthew Wimsey, the editor of the family genealogy. The initial frustration was that the book was privately printed so I could not determine the printer straight away and thus, a medium to contact the editor. Perhaps unwisely, I made fruitless attempts through various registries, court records, tax rolls, and military logs before determining I should have started with any small printer and asked them if they had knowledge of the book or if they could divine via the workmanship who the printer might be.

The only positive, if it could be called one, is that I simultaneously determined that Peter Wimsey was equally absent from the standard public records. I could understand the Foreign Office giving him cover and anonymity but why Matthew, who put his whole family's existence before the public. If the intelligence community was seriously involved in cloaking Peter Wimsey, then the only understandable explanation would be that Matthew Wimsey was a potential third red herring. This might explain the unusual coat of arms, *but* logic would dictate that a more standard representation would cause less suspicion whereas a sham depiction would be an obvious tipoff to someone like myself (who might recognize the book as a red herring). Therefore, the catty coat of arms could portend an honest genealogy, whose ancestors were either simple minded or self-assured enough about themselves to see the comic irony in their own name. After all, more than one individual questioned me if I was sure about the spelling of the last name. On the other hand, it could it be a *doppelganger*, a doubling back. Perhaps, Matthew Wimsey was the cover name for some intelligence operative cloaking Peter and they anticipated the logic that would lead me to dismiss their clever handiwork.



Thankfully, it was the close of the clerical working day. As I walked blindly through the mist, against a stiff breeze, my head began to ache and it was in this frame of mind that I looked up and saw Rafferty's heavy, green, wooden sign slightly tilted in the wind waving me in – beckoning me home.

The slide into the alcove, the hand sign to Teddy, and the first few sips of my beloved cool Smithwick's I remember - then ... Something: a sound, a smell, or a passing patron, caused me to start up. The Smithwick's glass was empty and warm and I had no idea how long ago I had finished it (if I had myself at all). In the light across the way, I could discern a few of the regulars (Irish boys) and "Smek and Smel," two slap happy Yanks from upstate New York who wasted a few good years of their lives studying Russian and had recently alighted after a world wind tour of nowhere. As I reflected on the drunken times spent with these two fun loving yahoos, whose sole erudition was the theory of peeing in the hotel room sink with the hot water running rather than stumbling down the hallway to the common WC in the middle of the night, I considered what theories of mine I might have unleashed in a state of uncontrolled inebriation.

Striding across the way with my glass clenched in my hand, I hailed the clowns as I approached, "Eh boys, how are things tonight?"

"Bobby!" the uneven twins responded in beer near unison. Mike, "Smek," was the tall one and Roger, "Smel," the shorter, thin one- a regular Mutt and Jeff, except Mike was generally clean-shaven.

"Listen boys, I want to thank you for filling in that mystery woman for me."

Mike was first off the blocks, "Miztery woman? What mizz tery wooman?"

"Hey owl fill in any dame that comes-salong that's no mizz tery is it?" quipped Roger.

"Look, it doesn't matter what hash ya slung the gal, I just want to know what you can tell me about her. What did she look like?"

"Luke like! Hell, I never eean sawyer." "Smely" Roger burped.

"Jez wat you getting hat, Booby? Ya tryin to get us goin?" "Smeky" Mike spit out with a wink and a twist of his head.

"It's too late for that. It seems you two are already *gone*." I replied, as I headed towards Teddy and the Irish Rovers. Smek and Smel stumbled along behind me like a spastic conga line at a wedding party. I knew if I stopped too quick, they'd end up hanging around my waist. The Irish blokes appeared more in control but you never knew for sure until it was too late and you had already set off the genetic, hair-trigger temper.

"Fellas, I'm trying to find out about the woman that came in to see me the other night. I wonder how many of ya she talked to and what you might be able to tell me about her."

They all looked at each other and, as if in a round robin, began to chant in turn:

"Never seen er before." "Never seen the laidy at tall." "Right, I niver seen er befur eeder."

"Come on boys, there's no harm in talking, she didn't pay ya off to keep mum did she?" All I got was confused and half-hostile looks. I realized I was pushing it with these blokes. I turned to Teddy: "What's the story Teddy? Tell me what ya *know* about her?"



"On me mudders grave I tell ya, the lady in kwestion 'as niver been in dis estawblishment befar. D' udder nite wuz d'ferced time I laid eze on er. Un dats a fackt. She 'ad dent ben ere mar un ten minutes afore ya. She jist way-ted by yer spot after I painted it out."

In good times and bad times, when I owed him money and he could have turned me out and when I was flush and he could have taken advantage of me, Teddy always played it straight. You couldn't catch him in lie or skimping on the line of a pint. I started to turn away.

"Now, thar wuz a gent come in ere a few weeks bak 'oweever." Teddy thoughtfully mused, "An *E* seemed ta be a pumpin the boys fur details as I recall. *E* came in narly effery dai fur a week. Lock klackwerk e wuz, an den owl of a sudden lock, e jist quit comin in alta getter."

"I don't suppose you caught a name or anything?"

"Naw, e didn't really let that out. The boys just called im "Mac." An Angleesh gent e was. Small chap, slight build, with a mustache an a bad cough."

"Thanks, Teddy. That might be helpful down the road." I said, as I headed for my spot.

I wondered if it could be Peter Wimsey himself, setting me up for this game of cat and mouse. Yes, the game had begun for real now I thought, as I ordered my Smithwick's and a Guinness for each of the lads. This £500 wasn't going to be as easy as I thought, but that didn't mean the puzzle couldn't be solved or the fee enjoyed. My competitive juices were flowing; Harriet Wimsey had set me a challenge and I relished a challenge.

### Chapter 3

About this time I was playing with the idea of a “straight” novel, about an Oxford woman graduate who found, in middle life, and after a reasonably satisfactory experience of marriage and motherhood, that her real vocation and full emotional fulfillment were to be found in the creative life of the intellect.<sup>v</sup>

There was no sun streaming through the curtainless windows to wake me; in fact, the patter of the rain beating the London mist down to the pavement was rhythmically soothing and prolonged my slumber. It was the sound of a rustling on my desk, just a few feet away from the couch on which I lay, that called me from a groggy half-conscious state. Without moving a muscle, I watched through half-closed eyes. Gwen was cautiously reaching over the desk and sliding the thin Wimsey book back into the folded wrapping paper where I had left it. I let her softly slip back into the other room and quietly shut the door before I made even the slightest movement. Her appetite for reading novels was understandable and even admirable for her class, but what intrigued her enough to take the chance on spiriting away this dreary bit of family history from my desk? With its dry, mundane title she couldn't possibly have taken it for anything more than it was. I began to experience doubts about Gwen. What did I really know about her “secretarial” background? She came from an agency and I took her without researching them, let alone her. I had heard of chaps who sent girls into service to



spy on their employers and even go so far as to rifle their files and safes for documentation. Could she be a *plant* or was she just another red herring, if so the fourth, in Harriet Wimsey's elaborate plot?

I reflected on Harriet and pondered her slight-built, mustachioed accomplice. Was he Peter Wimsey or Michael? Or was he a Wimsey at all? Perhaps someone from the Foreign Office was just using Wimsey as a cover. Or for that matter, was I even sure that the Foreign Office was involved? I stretched out like a cat, separating my fingers and toes, and then ran my long fingers through my short, wavy, auburn hair. I looked down at my waist and marveled that my figure wasn't worse, considering all the fish and chips meals from Rafferty's.

As if from guilt, I vaulted myself to the floor to let Gwen know I was awake. As I cleaned up and got dressed, I considered my options. I still had my contacts within the US Embassy who could run a check on both Kathrine Lammas and Peter Wimsey but I hated to play that hand too often. For now, I needed to work with the facts at hand. First, Harriet Wimsey gives me the names of her husband, Peter, and Katherine Lammas (the latter from a group of letters pasted together after being burned in a fireplace grate). Next, she then sends me a book with obscure references and a seemingly mocking family crest which itself acknowledges the play on the word *whimsy*. What is the common thread? Names, letters, books, — words! She mentioned a thwarted career in translation that drew her to me; words were important to her. But it had to be more than just words — the *meaning* of words is the key to translation. The translator, like the writer, picks and chooses his words carefully. Each sentence can be broken down and analyzed for the *choices*

made. Each *letter* of each word can alter the meaning. Harriet was obsessed with the *letters* and their meaning but what was left out could have been more meaningful than what remained. To find meaning I had to look beyond the surface of the statements, to the word choices made and what meaning might be unintentionally revealed. Harriet's story might be similar to a false scene; in covering his tracks, a murderer inadvertently leaves clues that ironically betray his intended deception. To my knowledge, Harriet's case involved no murder, yet it was a mystery nonetheless. I needed to break down Harriet's tale beyond the words, beyond the letters; the key was in meaning and the *choices* made.

It was clear the book itself was meaningful, for she chose to send it. It may have been meant as red herring but in and of itself, sending the book had meaning. She was a frustrated translator, as she implied I was, and in her description of a fellow traveler she revealed herself. She played with letters and words just as this book played on the name of Wimsey. 'Played on the name,' I thought and then I realized the game was in the name. Something important was left out like just like the H in Wimsey. Something was missing in the names. Either Katherine Lammas or Peter Wimsey were somehow incomplete.

By now, it was 9:30 and I had slept the morning away hoping to wait out the lovely London rain. Time was wasting. As to Gwen's little book snatching, I was going to leave it for later, to see if she brought it up first, but luckily something made me decide to confront her about the Wimsey book at once, before going off to track down its printer.

"Gwen, can you come in here for a minute please?" I called out.



She opened the door timidly and stood there with her narrow frame in the soft, flowing flowered dress looking at me nervously. What little morning light came through the windows illuminated her oval face framed with the sandy brown hair and, today, a pair of ludicrously large earrings that appeared to be representing parrots in gilded cages. I sat behind the desk with my right hand fingering the binding of the little book before me.

“Have you ever heard of Peter Wimsey?”

“Lawd Pee-ta? Sure, I’ve read about em.”

Thank God she wasn’t going to deny flinching the book, I thought. “And what do you think about him?”

“Ah, don’t gawin far the detective or spy sort meself. Too much of the boring *real* stuff about ere fur tha. No offense intended.”

Heavens, I thought, she knew of his Foreign Office connection just from reading the book. I must have been half snookered when I read it to have missed that (though I do remember catching that *Lord* business at the end of the book). Or was she just making a sly reference to her own snooping with that comment about boring detective work?

“So you don’t think much of Peter Wimsey as a man then?” I queried.

“As a man? E dozen strike me as romantic, ez too much a brainy tawker. Sum girls loik that type, ut not may.”

She seemed to gather a lot from one little book and I was beginning to think she was having trouble separating fact from fiction; she did spend a great deal of time reading.

"So, are you familiar with Harriet Wimsey too?" I ventured.

"Arriet Wimsey? Ow, ya mean Arriet Vine? I eared about that Busman's 'oneymoon bizness but never caught it."

"Vain? Is that her maiden name? Did this honeymoon business have anything to do with Katherine Lammas?"

"Kathrine's Lamas? Sounds more like a searcuss akt than a play?" she giggled.

"Look we're getting nowhere with this pratter. You seem to know more about the Wimseys than you could have gotten from this little book." I said waving it at her. "What gives?"

"At book? What makes ya fink I knowed anyfing at owl 'bout at book?"

"Don't play innocent with me, I saw you put it back this morning, and unless the universe has altered the course of time, or your behavior, you couldn't have been here for more than half an hour to look it over."

"Awl rot, I sawed it on the desk when I come to check on ya vis mawnin. I ardley loked it over. No stary at tall, jist a bunch of drivel 'bouts lineage."

So her knowledge about the Wimseys wasn't just from a book. The puzzle was starting to come together. Perhaps, she herself was part of the puzzle, an unknowing player in the prank to confuse me. Could all the answers be so close to home, with this girl whose head was somewhere between a book and the clouds, while I wandered the streets of London searching in vain. I had to be careful where I went from here:

"Tell me Gwen have you ever met Peter or Harriet Wimsey?"



“Ya mean the akt-tors? Naw, like I said, I niver seen the play, but I read sum o’ the starries.”

“Peter Wimsey is an actor then?”

“Blimey, ya tink ‘es real don’t cha?” She started to laugh then halfway stopped herself, giggling out, “‘es jist a character in bunch o books e is; ‘es not real at-tall. And nigh-thar is at ‘arriet Vine.”

My well-planned world began to come apart; my searches, my postulations, my nearly fatal call to the CID officer at the Embassy (I shuddered) were all part of a great humiliation. Characters from books like letters from words fit the pattern of the puzzle. I could do nothing but put on the most stoic face possible and continue. “So, these *characters* are they in books written by a Katherine Lammas?”

“Naw, tha’ isn’t ‘er nime, but eh r written by a laidy. A “Dorothy” something. Dorothy ... Sairs, me thinks. Thar detectives, you know, always solvin murders.”

“Well, characters from detective novels eh, that’s very interesting. Thanks for your help Gwen.” I said and turned back to my office, before I had to take in any more of her wide eyes and suppressed giggling.

Detective novels for Christ’s Sake! Like so many other so-called intellectuals, I generally dismissed them as a low form of literature and hadn’t read any since I was a schoolboy. Now I was paying the price for my hubris and my belittling of Gwen’s literary tastes. So the *book* was the clue or at least a clue. I thumbed through it slowly. In light of the new evidence, it was clear that the book was a hoax but obviously for more than just my benefit. There was too much behind this little rag

to account for its existence simply as part of my puzzle or to let it go. She was challenging me to plumb the depths, to 'translate' this book or others into meaning.

I spent the rest of the day at the library skimming every book I could find by a certain Dorothy L. Sayers. There were over a dozen works from *Whose Body?* in 1923 to Gwen's unseen play, *Busman's Honeymoon* from '36, published as a novel just last year with the elusive Matthew Wimsey making his appearance at the end. Harriet "Vane" seems to have come on the scene in *Strong Poison*, taken control in *Gaudy Night*, and been pushed off center stage in *Busman's Honeymoon*. Maybe it was this quick dismissal that was at the root of the case. My Harriet was obviously out to prove something, but what? Was she playing the role of detective or some sort of femme fatale? The answer and the woman were a mystery.

With only a few days left to wrap up the case before meeting my mystery woman, and what seemed at this time a potential defeat, I had no time to read all of Sayers' works, let alone dissect them for hidden meanings. In fact, I wasn't totally sure that Dorothy Sayers herself was involved. Yet there was ample reason to suspect that Sayers might have created a little puzzle for me, like she did for her readers in her Montague Egg stories. The love of creating a good puzzle was evident in her work and, in addition, there was her habit of good-natured, ironic jokes, as with the *Papers Relating to the Family of Wimsey*. She not only had a good time with her cohorts creating the bogus book, but now made sport of me by sending it to the office as a clue. Also, in our meeting, the mystery woman had referred to living on a farm called "Talboys" which, although it was used in *Busman's Honeymoon*, I discovered was the name of a murder victim in Mary



Braddon's book *Lady Audley's Secret*. Sayers obviously liked to leave a trail of obscure references as a joke on her fellow authors or fans. Maybe my mystery woman was doing the same thing; Katherine Lammas could be a similar reference, which I as of yet had been unable to trace. It all seemed to point to Sayers as the mystery woman. However, caution dictated that I could not rule out the possibility that Katherine was a real life fan who, in a schizophrenic state, had taken on the role of Harriet and was playing out the role of amateur detective. Before I could settle the Why or How, the first step was to try to discern Who was Katherine Lammas and What was her relationship to Dorothy Sayers.

Now was the time to make the call to Mark Jeffries at CID and I did it from a call box outside the library. He not only promised to run a check for Katherine Lammas, but, as a rabid detective fiction fan himself, he gave me the name and phone number of a promising young translator of Italian he had met, a Betty Raymond, who was also a rabid fan of Dorothy Sayers. I called her next, gave a vague explanation of my quest, and made an appointment for the following day. There would be no Rafferty's tonight. Under my arm I carried the rosetta stone, *Gaudy Night*; at this point everything I had gleaned pointed to it being the most useful of any single text the library had. Tonight would be devoted to finding clues to Harriet Vane, whoever she might be.

## Chapter 4

When in a light-hearted manner I set out, fifteen years ago, to write the first "Lord Peter" book, it was with the avowed intention of producing something "less like a conventional detective story and more like a novel."<sup>vi</sup>

The first three hundred pages of *Gaudy Night* were a stark contrast to Sayers' prior works and in no manner a conventional detective story. With its academic tone, use of Latin, and obscure chapter heading passages, like Pierre Erondell's in Chapter IX, it seemed more like the ramblings of a research scientist than a writer of popular fiction. The push to establish erudition seemed overdone and my head was beginning to throb as I grew weary. The call at the opening of Chapter XV : "Do but consider what an excellent thing sleep is:" almost became a self-fulfilling prophesy. I went into the hall washroom and, besides the usual, washed my face and slapped my cheeks red. From the phone on Gwen's desk, I rang over to Rafferty's and ordered some fish and chips along with a few bottle beers. One of the lads was always glad to run it over for a few bob but they weren't especially fleet of foot. The chips would be cold and the beer warm in exchange. It wasn't long before I was startled with a call from the outer office.



"Bawby! Bawby! W'ere the devil are ye Lad?" The inner door swung open and Donnie, one of my favorite Irish Rovers, came in with the fundamentals.

"Well now, this aught ta tide ye over, me lad. Y'ere lucky ye are that Molly 'adn't left for the night."

"Ah, you're a lifesaver you are Donnie. Here's a little something for you and something for Molly too" I said, as I handed him first his tip and then a bit extra.

"You give er a kiss for me will ya?"

"Naw, gwan thar don't ya be a startin sumptin. I've got enough tribbles as it tis. And it looks as ef, ye've a bit a wurk yet ta do," he said motioning at he piles of notes scattered about the desk as he headed for the door.

"Yes, I certainly do. Thanks again Donnie."

Before Donnie had arrived, I had plowed my way up to Chapter XVII and now my rewards were multiple. It promised much with: "He that questioneth much shall learn much, and content much:" from Francis Bacon. By now Lord Peter had come to the rescue and the author had returned to a form, if not the style, of the detective story. In comparison to the beginning, it seemed the last two hundred pages flew by for my adrenaline was outpacing the warm beers at the end.

The last chapter was uncommonly romantic and perhaps unnecessary in this work, but it apparently bridged the gap to the play "Busman's Honeymoon." I put the book down on my desk and collapsed back into the couch. There was just so much here to process that I wasn't sure where to start. Only one thing seemed related to my reluctant detective role in London. Of all the diverse themes in *Gaudy*

Night, what appealed to me most of all was the case of lost intellectual integrity (heightened by the resultant desperate acts of one wronged by uncaring colleagues). It was haunting. A man risks his professional stature by hiding evidence that would undermine his thesis. As I sank back deeper into the cracks of the leather couch, I reflected back to a similar desperate act in the recent past.

As the *avtobus* pulled away from the front of the airport in Warsaw and we each picked up our single bag and headed silently through main entrance, I felt an uncommon touch of anxiety. Garperovski apparently was feeling a considerable bit more; sweat beaded across his brow, his face was flushed, and his eyes darted about nervously. Any *Militsianeer* who was paying attention would pull him aside for questioning if I didn't act fast.

"For God's sake, settle down! We'll never make it to the plane if you don't pull yourself together."

"I'm ... I'm fine. Don't worry."

"Nonsense, you're the one worrying. Stop looking around. Just look bored or tired."

Just before the end of the corridor, where we had to turn, stood a uniformed *Militsia*. I had to act decisively to avoid a prolonged questioning, under which Garperovski wouldn't hold up. As we neared the corner, I stepped in front of Garperovski and went up to the *Militsianeer* face to face.



"Officer, my friend here drank too much vodka last night. Where is the washroom? He needs to throw up *before* we get on the plane. Can you show us where it is?"

"It is down to the left. You can find it yourselves." He curtly replied and looked blankly over my head with an air of affected superiority.

"Thank you, very much." I nodded and put my arm around Garperovski's shoulders, shielding his face as much as possible, as I led him around the corner, "Come on, little brother, I'll help you." I said loudly.

I pushed him into the stinking room and past the *uborsheetsa* sitting just inside the doorway.

"You fool!" I uttered in English in hushed tones, "If you want me to get you out of here you better get control over yourself. I'm not going to let you take me down with you, got it! Wash your face with water but don't dry it!"

As he did so, I took a leak against the wall and tried to calm myself by watching the flow run down the slanted trough to a rusted drain that probably led to the same pit as the six holes to my right with their wooden footpads on each side. And where would today lead I wondered, as the warm steam rose to my face and wafted my scent over those of my predecessors to my nose. It wasn't a matter of wondering how I got here, I knew.

It was that damn Jefferies at CID. He gave me enough *leads* and thus enough rope to hang myself. If you're in to somebody deep enough and need them to get along, you end up in messes like this. I knew he was full of crap when he said it

was a simple mission. Just pick up Garperovski and his manuscripts at the University of Kiev and get him to the airport in Warsaw. From there it was simply a matter of getting him on the plane. Yes, it was a very simple matter indeed.

Al Garperovski had a theory that, at the ending of the War, the military created a "great lie." He asserted that the common belief that the war was finally ended to save the loss of more lives was a falsehood. The gassing of thousands, he claimed, was not a horror to end all horrors. The ending of the War was a political decision not a humanitarian one. The fact that both sides had various types of gas and used them proved that mutual ownership was not a deterrent, but instead accelerated the proliferation of more destructive weapons. He further claimed to have knowledge of a German plan for a monster weapon that could end a war quickly and thus save a million lives on the side of the aggressor, while inflicting crippling long-term damage to the opponent with lightning quickness. Hitler's vanity, that such a weapon could be produced and the belief that he could smash his foes with minimal losses, would fuel his hunger for revenge from the perceived humiliation of Versailles. Garperovski maintained that Hitler intended to build such a monstrous weapon of destruction because of the "great lie."

How Garperovski sold his story to Henry Luce and how that man had such influence with the US military was beyond the scope of my duties and need to know. I was left to imagine stories running the gauntlet from New York to Baltimore to Washington DC and growing along the way. That vaunted briefcase of Garperovski's might have held no more than a brisket sandwich for all I knew or even cared. Garperovski, Albert or Abraham or whatever his name was, could be a

total fraud for all that mattered; the job was to get him and his silly papers out of Warsaw and today was the day.

Finished shaking, I went over to the sink by Garperovski and washed my hands. With a twist of my head, I indicated it was time to go. Mindful of my instructions, he had left water cling to his un-trimmed, curly, black beard. It was conceivable that he might have thrown up and washed. He still seemed nervous, but at least his face was no longer flushed and he had a plausible alibi to fall back on if pressured. Everybody was nervous around these goons anyway and they liked it that way. We threw enough coins into the *uborsheetsa's* saucer on the way out to quiet her without drawing suspicion and she rose and stood up in stoic silence as we walked out the door. In reflection, maybe my job wasn't the most unpleasant after all.

We turned right and headed towards the checkpoint. Fortunately, the same guard was at the corner of the main corridor. As we neared, I made eye contact and nodded to him and he quickly turned away as if he was afraid I might hail him. We went straight to the first queue. I wanted to go before Garperovski in case he got pulled out of line but the reality was that he was already tied to me, like a albatross, and I needed to make sure he got on the plane for my *own* sake. That damn Jefferies had counted on this. Behind him I could prod him along, act unconcerned and dawdle so they would want to move the line along, and most of all keep a watch on things. If I went first, once through the line I couldn't look back; he would be on his own and I would be out of the equation. So I stood behind him. Even now he was inching forward in anticipation of being next. I had just grabbed his coat when



they signaled him to come forward. He started to bolt, but feeling the resistance, he perceived my intent and marched forward cautiously. Holding my ground without moving forward, I turned my head to the side and appeared to look aimlessly about in the most bored fashion I could muster. Placing my left shoe on the top of my suitcase, I started to bend over to tie my laces when someone barked: "Next." Perfect.

The idiot Garperovski had stopped on the other side of the checkpoint and was turning around so I had to give a hearty cough to attract attention while giving him an icy stare. To my right a *Militsianeer* with a machine gun hanging at his side from a shoulder strap stepped forward. As I looked at his weapon, I thought back to the harrowing part of the train ride from Kiev.

It had started out joyously and that should have been a warning. We had run into two Americans and shared a bottle of vodka and wagon compartment with them. Foreigners, especially Americans, being a novelty in Russia stood out in a crowd. I had met "Smek and Smel" before and they usually granted great cover. They were as clear of political involvement as they were silly and that was saying a lot. Never at a loss as to how to shock or knock the status quo, they would snap photos of each other with an arm around a Lenin statue or bussing one of Stalin, as long as no *Militsia* were in sight. Generally, they kept the American image safe by speaking French when the locals were within earshot of their antics. This pride of country endeared them to me almost as much as the opportunity to drink from the well of their incessant vodka purchases.

We had hardly settled into our compartment before the bottle of vodka, black bread, sausage, knife, cheese, and a few rare oranges were hauled out from Smek and Smel's trove of parcels. As the train rambled through the little villages and wonderful countryside in between, they proceeded to add to my Russian vocabulary.

"Do you know what the longest word in the Russian vocabulary is?" Smek asked.

"Can't say as I do." I replied.

"It's dostapremyeachatelnestee."

"Great. So what does it mean?" I inquired.

"That's the best thing about it." gleefully answered Smel, "There's no direct English equivalent. It means places to go and see when you are in a town or area. It's often translated as "points of interest or sightseeing places," but that really doesn't capture the meaning."

"It is used before a city with the genitive case, for example: Dostapremyeachatelnestee Moskvee." Smek chimed in while spitting out the seeds of an orange he was eating onto a piece of paper.

"Well, if I ever come across a city with a case of the genitive, I'll know what to ..."

"Stawup! Stawup!" an apoplectic Garperovski shouted as he grabbed at some papers lying on the little fold down table between the benches.

Smek had put the saliva-wet seeds on the papers between us.

"For Christ's sakes fella, I gotta put them somewhere." Smek responded hotly. Red-faced, half from embarrassment and half from anger, he slid the seeds onto a small slip of paper with an orange border at the end of the table by the window.

"I'm almost through with it anyhow." He said as he popped the last piece in his mouth.

"It's really a wonderful word. We ought to have a similar word in English but we don't." Smel wedged in trying to calm the air of hostility that had pervaded the compartment. His efforts were as futile as was the odor of the orange in displacing the smell of sweat and stale air in the compartment.

"Here." spit out Smek, as he placed the last seeds on top of the others. As if in some sort of challenge, Garperovski, with a look of contempt, shot up from the bench; lowered the window; reached out with his arm; and tossed the small piece of paper with the seeds out the window. He stood a moment watching them disappear in the wind, closed the window, and sat down in disgust with a grunt. His once white shirt was now covered with black specks from the coal dust blown from the engine along the train and sucked in through the window.

"So what's the longest word?" Smel, ever to the rescue, asked me.

"Dostapreme something or other." I ventured.

"Try this, ... dosta."

"Dosta" I said knowing the familiar pattern drill.

"Premyey."

"Premyey."

"Chatel."



"Chatel."

"Nostee."

"Nostee."

"Dosta... Premyea ... Chatel ... Nostee"

"Dostapremyeacha ....

"Dostapremyea ... Chatelnostee."

"Dostapremyea ... Chatelnostee."

"Dostapremyeachatelnostee."

"Dostapremyeachatelnostee."

"Damn, he's got it already!" shouted Smel.

"Good job." I said, "You still dream of being a teacher don't you?"

"Actually, its dustepremyeachatelnastee with unaccented O's shifting to Ah's."

Smek remarked snidely. "But, of course, you know that."

Before the nonsense could continue, the train began to slow and came to a stop. Smel cautiously lowered the window and with the air outside nearly still, in turn, we all looked out. We were about a third of the way back and up ahead we could see the framework of the heavy black lift jacks that would raise the carriages of the wagons off the trucks beneath, so they could be changed from the wide Russian gauge to the standard width used in the rest of Europe. No one was allowed to leave the train. After a considerable amount of time, our car was moved into position; lifted into the air; and the smaller trucks were rolled beneath us. We peered out the windows with curiosity as the wagon car was lowered into place, hooked up, and pulled forward. Smek, closest to the door, looked down the

hallway and announced: "Better get your documents and tickets out, here come the border guards."

As we got out our passports and tickets with the orange border, I turned to Garperovski just as he turned to me in shock. He started to grab his papers and shove them in his briefcase. The realization hit Smek and Smel simultaneously and Smek crowed: "Christ, Shitbird here, threw his ticket out the window."

He started to laugh but caught my gaze and grasped the seriousness of the situation. I reached over and took one of the pieces of paper Garperovski was stuffing into the brief case.

"Let me have this. Here, take my ticket and act like nothing is wrong. You got that." I said sternly, looking him in the eyes as I handed him my ticket. I stepped out the door and turned to the right towards the toilet. As I neared the end of the car, two border guards with machine guns slung across their chests saw me through the glass windows in the end doors and waved me back. I lifted up the paper, waved it, and smiled dumbly before tuning on my heels and heading back toward our end of the car. As soon as they entered a compartment to check documents, I headed back to the john and locked myself in.

Soon they came by and turned the door handle. They pounded on the door and said to come out. I remained silent and was surprised when I heard the sound of their heavy boots march on. I waited another ten minutes and peered out. To the left, the border guards were just entering the last compartment in our car but to the right, through the door windows, I saw another pair was nearing our car and would soon enter. I backed into the aisle ass first and made sure they saw me enter the

john. I hoped they would assume that I had already been checked out by the first team and let me go. No such luck. They banged on the door soundly and demanded I come out. I waited but knew this crew wouldn't go away. They banged again and stood close to the door and purposely cocked their machine guns' bolts so I could hear them. A sound I recall clearly to this day. I waited just a few seconds and then came out pulling shut my fly. They demanded my passport and ticket. I put Garperovski's paper in my left hand and produced the passport with my right. After the customary close but meaningless inspection, they handed it back and asked for my ticket. I said I gave it to the other guards before taking a leak, hoping they would buy that scenario. It looked doubtful but just then the other pair came out of the last compartment and, as they looked our way, I put Garperovski's paper in my right hand with the passport and waved it in the air like before. The one looked past me blankly but, due to some stroke of fortune, the second gave just the slightest nod of recognition. I turned to my inquisitors and said: "See. I'll show you." And I proceeded to walk naturally towards the other pair. Our compartment was the next to the last and I stopped at the door and said to the first pair: "As you see the other crew took my ticket and checked my documents do you want to see my passport?"

The closest one started to step my way as I held out the passport, but the other silently waved him off and they turned and headed to the next car. I lifted the paper and passport back in the air and smiled dumbly again as I looked back at the second pair of guards. They gave a stoic nod and went back towards the front of the train.



As I stepped into our compartment and closed the door behind me, the sound of the machine gun bolt echoed again in my head.

"What are you waiting for? Are you deaf or something?" The airport security guard was standing almost chest to chest with me and glaring menacingly. His right hand was wrapped around the machine gun bolt. With his left hand he held the stock outward making the sling tight.

"Take your passport and move along you deaf ox!"

"Thank you." I said, taking my passport. Realizing I was probably sweating a bit, I felt I had to *seem* unconcerned about being detained. "I'm not deaf, just a little tired, I drank too much vodka last night."

They all could understand that answer, especially from foreigners. They were convinced they were the greatest drinkers in the world and no one could hold their own against them. As the security guard envisioned my being drunk under the table by his comrades at some farewell party, I moved on and found Garperovski around the corner trembling.

"I...I thought they were going to detain you. W w what would ..."

"Shut up and let's get on the plane."

Back in London, I put us in an out of the way hotel and from the lobby phone booth made arrangements with Jefferies to hand over Garperovski. But to my surprise it wasn't going to be to an English or even American agent but to a LIFE magazine reporter, a representative of Henry Luce. I went upstairs to the room

pondering my next move. I was determined to find out about Garperovski's "documentation."

"You're leaving tomorrow on a flight to New York. An American reporter will take you on. Since the Foreign Office won't have time to de-brief you, I am to do that now. First, I will need to go over your documentation. Oh, and by the way put *this* in the proper place before you give me the papers." I said pulling the single page from my coat pocket. "Sorry, it got wrinkled, but at least it wasn't thrown out a train window."

I noticed he started to protest, but, with the tone of my last sentence, he humbly took the sheet and went over to his briefcase and proceeded to sort the papers. After a few minutes, he handed me the documents and went and flopped exhaustedly into a big armchair. I sat at a little desk by the window and proceeded to read his proposal. It was getting late and, after suffering through several pages, I rang the front desk and ordered a half dozen bottles of beer and some fish and chips. After my experience with the ticket incident, Garperovski wasn't going sightseeing on my watch.

His treatise had sounded plausible, but there was something about his supporting documentation that seemed odd. He frequently referred to a source on several dates, but there was an obvious gap in one important time frame and the writing was such that it was as though he was trying to draw attention away from the missing reference. A politician, historian, scientist, or even a journalist might easily miss the subtle clue but to me it was as though he was trying to cover his tracks. The passage of circuitous writing was similar to my waving the passport together with

the page from Garperovski's documents to the border guards to take their mind away from the ticket. The goofy American with his obsession over an unnecessary piece of paper was what they *saw*; they didn't look for a ticket. I was sure Garperovski didn't want anyone to analyze his theories any deeper than what *he* presented. But it didn't really matter, did it? He made it to the West where he would undoubtedly be feted by the press, the academic community, and God knows who else and thus, achieve a prestige and perhaps fame and fortune he never could have had if he had remained at the University of Kiev. And for my part, was it my job to police the world? I had achieved my objective. I was off the hook and now Jefferies would owe *me*. There was no more point in questioning Garperovski's academic honesty than in questioning the meaning of life. Anyway, the beer and fish and chips had arrived.



## Chapter 5

In fact, when I came to look into details, the real case was so like my imagination that I had to make some alterations in my plot so as to avoid a dangerously close resemblance to the fact.<sup>vii</sup>

Fish and chips stained newspapers and stale beer smell decorated my office; it had been more of a "tawdry night" than anything else. The theme of intellectual integrity and the unacknowledged conflicting thesis information made me obsess with Garperovski and the Life magazine article of the past. It was almost as if Sayers was giving me a clue to resolve a conflict that I needed to put behind me. In the final analysis, however, I was satisfied that *Gaudy Night* was the key to understanding the mystery woman. I had raced over some of the latter passages with Lord Peter snoring in the punt and pontificating before the Dons while solving the "crime." But, by that time, I was fairly certain that Sayers herself had posed as the mystery woman. It made sense, even with some of my earlier theories. And, she fit the description in size and style. Yet, I wanted to hear what Betty Raymond had to say and, of course, get Jefferies' report on the search for Katherine Lammas. Raymond had suggested we meet at the same library I had been at the day before. It was halfway between her flat and my office and she said she had something she wanted to show me.

Binary circles. But their relationship was tied to Strong Poole not Candy Night.

She was as Jefferies had described: a comely, enthusiastic young lady with more knowledge about detective fiction, and Dorothy Sayers in particular, than she could ever hope to contain. With her square jaw, high forehead, clear deep eyes, wide nose, thin upper lip, and broad friendly smile, she looked more Slavic than English. She had with her a folding portfolio and a set of books, *The Devil is an English Gentleman*, but she said that could wait. She was eager to hear about my encounter with the mystery woman and insisted on all the details. I filled her in briefly, perhaps holding back less than I should, but I was impressed with her enthusiasm and taken in by her youth. Like Gwen, she found a life in these books that had escaped me until now. We reviewed the events and considered the possibilities. I ventured my belief that the mystery woman was Dorothy Sayers herself and explained why I thought so. Finally, we agreed about how the common bond of translation would be attractive to Dorothy. She surprised me when she mentioned that Dorothy had done some sort of “mysterious” translations from the French for the “Poles” after the war. It seems to have been a good income for her but lasted less than a year, about the same time she became acquainted with a Russian Jew named John Cournos. Cournos was born in Kiev, but his family emigrated to the US. He left school at age twelve and worked his way from office boy to assistant editor of the Philadelphia Record. In 1917, he was appointed a member of the Anglo-Russian Commission to St. Petersburg in Russia and worked for the British Foreign Office.<sup>viii</sup> Since his novel, *The Mask*, was published in 1919 and he contributed to literary journals, it was assumed that Dorothy met him through

literary circles. But their relationship was tied to *Strong Poison* not *Gaudy Night*.

In reviewing my situation, Raymond and I agreed that the mystery woman's presentation of the letters was a play on *Gaudy Night*.

Finally, it was my turn to ask the questions. "What do you make of the Katherine Lammas reference?"

"I think it is another of Dorothy's personas. In one of my meetings with her she spoke of working on a book entitled *Cat O' Mary* and I am sure the young heroine was named Katherine but I don't think she mentioned the last name. As she described it, the book was based upon her early childhood and, though she probably wouldn't admit it, as she spoke about the character, I knew she was really talking about herself. She enjoyed sprinkling her stories with fragments of her own life, her own interests and even her own possessions." ix

"For example?"

"Well, lots of things. When she attended Oxford the school had a dog named Scruggs, an Old English sheepdog; she gave this same name to a dog in "The Five Red Herrings." And buildings and rooms especially, at one time she had a top-story flat in St. Georges Square, Pimlico and she gave the same kind of room to Lord Peter's assistant Miss Climpson. Also, she had a room with three great windows looking out onto Mecklenburg Square; she opens *Gaudy Night* with Harriet looking out those same windows. Throughout the novel, Dorothy's own life, her experiences as a writer of detective fiction, her personality, her thoughts and feelings, her way of talking, even her appearance run parallel with Harriet's, lending solidity and resonance. Harriet and perhaps Dorothy at times is fitted with



longing to lose herself in some impersonal, scholarly piece of research, away from the pressures and confusion of an author's life with its continual distraction of publisher's contracts, blurbs, publicity and rivalries." <sup>x</sup>

"Yes, that current ran strong throughout the novel, I picked up the regret and longing for a return to the academic life in the first chapter." I said flipping through the early pages, "Here, where she writes 'But she doubted whether she were now capable of any such withdrawal. She had long ago taken the step that put the grey-walled paradise of Oxford behind her. No one can bathe in the same river twice, not even in the Isis.' <sup>xi</sup> Its as though she had just read Thomas Wolfe and was having doubts about the choices she had made."

"I can't say if she had read Wolfe but I agree with you that the doubts about her life choices run throughout *Gaudy Night*. It isn't so much a nostalgic desire to go back as a regret about "The Road Not Taken." There are times when I am convinced she felt almost pushed into detective fiction."

"How's that, by her parents perhaps?"

"No that would be strictly American. But it is close. The family was heavily involved with writers. Her father was a school chum and acquaintance of Oscar Wilde and her mother was a niece of Percival Leigh, the humorist, who was also an amateur actor and a friend of Dickens and Thackeray. <sup>xii</sup> That's where she got her middle name from, which she vehemently stresses that people use."

"So it was more of an internal pressure than any external one?"

"Not totally. Dorothy always aspired to be an actress. Even from a young age she dressed up in costumes and put on plays. Her parents encouraged her acting out

her fantasies. She would get the whole household to take different parts and the plays were *not* one day affairs. Her favorite play was the Three Musketeers and it was a long running role. She identified herself with Athos, the hopeless lover, hiding a broken heart behind a melancholy smile. Mr Sayers, at least, went so far as to wear a false beard in his impersonation of Louis XIII. With Dorothy it was all consuming. She *was* Athos, as an actress is a character on the stage.<sup>xiii</sup> And a year later she still signed letters from school to her cousin Ivy as "Ever Your Loving Athos". Yet when she got to school she found out that actors, and even more so actresses, were looked down upon and she told me she was constantly warned to stay clear of them. She gradually was pushed into directing and writing for school plays and I think her childlike enthusiasm was squashed along with her dreams of the stage by her "Christian" teachers whom she once described as Pharisees. I remember her saying they would 'applaud the play and scorn the player.'<sup>xiv</sup> Her teachers totally discouraged her dreams of being an actress and told her that she should stick to writing rather than acting. She really is an intense person and apparently always has been."

"Still, such incidents alone do not seem to account for turning away from acting if she had such a strong personality and desire."

"Certainly not, but most of her motivation remains unstated. Let's have lunch and then go over some of the other *clues* in *Gaudy Night*."

We found a snug little tea room across the square that served sandwiches. We were waited upon in tradition by an efficient young lady in a black dress with a short white lace apron and a white hat. After a light lunch and chit chat about the

un-rewarded rigors of translating, we settled back with Raymond's notes, the library's copy of *Gaudy Night*, and some excellent scones and a pot of Earl Grey tea. Betty Raymond was the proverbial fountain of information on Sayers' life and works and I now drank from her well more as a lover of words and literature than as a detective. She spoke of the other pressures she was sure that influenced Dorothy even more so than her schoolgirl teachers. Not unexpectedly, for the daughter of a cleric, finances were a major issue in Sayers' life. It was evident that even with the emolument from the Gilchrist scholarship Dorothy's father had a fair amount to pay while she was at Oxford and Dorothy often expressed concern about this.<sup>xv</sup> As I listened, it was clear to me that it wasn't that Dorothy was denied funds, but the contrary that seemed to be the root of the problem. It was the old devil *Guilt* that drove Dorothy. From her portfolio Betty produced a copy of one of Dorothy's post graduate letters home that filled in the gaps in one of the burned out notes:

Nobody can feel more acutely than I do the unsatisfactoriness of my financial position... If you like I'll make a sporting offer – that if you can manage to help me to “keep going” until next summer, then, if Lord Peter is still unsold I will chuck the whole thing, confess myself beaten and take a permanent teaching job.<sup>xvi</sup>

The note now had a totally different *meaning* than when presented to me by the mystery woman. The glaring difference, after filling in the omissions, made the translator in me reflect on the many incomplete or shoddy translations that exist from the Bible to modern texts. She had given me a red herring, a clue, and a commentary on the power of words all with one scrap of paper.

But the over-riding vision was not hers but the over-protectiveness of aged parents doting on an only child. Her father had taught her the violin and practiced



with her. He had started her on Latin at the age of six. He had allowed her, conspiratorially, to dress up in his masonic regalia. He had joined in the game of musketeers, playing the part of Louis XIII and putting on a false beard to please her. For many years he had supported her financially, waiting for her to find her way as a writer. He and her mother had welcomed Mac, the unconventional marriage partner she had sprung on them, and both had been lavish in presents for the London flat.<sup>xvii</sup> Had her parents at any point ever drawn the line and ceased to fund her dreams she might have made truly individual choices. As it was, their constant financial support, despite their limited means, put significant pressure on Dorothy to “ante up” by becoming *productive*. She turned away from her dreams to be an actress, turned away from her love of languages and translation, and she took teaching jobs she hated. Along the way she compensated with her detective writing (which she has Harriet mock in *Gaudy Night* even as the two of them are involved in it). The damning “Book of the Moment” scene, the comments about not being able to switch genres for fear that sales will go down, and the challenge from Lord Peter “to abandon the jigsaw kind of story and write a book about human beings for a change”<sup>xviii</sup> all reveal the lurking fear that a poor or unwanted choice had been made. Or as Lord Peter summarizes, “I’ve been running away from myself for twenty years, and it doesn’t work.”<sup>xix</sup> In the context of his challenge to Harriet to change her writing and focus, it is clearly Sayers struggling with her inner self that we see represented; Harriet as the Sayers of the past and Lord Peter as the foil, the Sayers that was always dreamed of and the hope of the Sayers to be. As I explained my interpretation of this passage to Betty, we both agreed that the over-riding fear

of all writers and the great insecurity of all translators is the same: the doubt, the uncertainty, the eternal question "Am I a Hack?"

I can't say that Raymond felt as deeply as I that this uncertainty was behind the writing of *Gaudy Night* and the resultant killing off of the Lord Peter series in the creative/production sense (and therefore a turning away from detective fiction). But we both agreed that creatively *Gaudy Night* was the end of her detective fiction career<sup>xx</sup> and her challenge to me was somehow related. It was dark now and the efficient waitress in black and white asked us politely to move along.

*The Devil Is An English Gentleman*, and asked me to spend a day reading it. She said Dorothy had told her that Courmes' version of their relationship was described in Chapter 28 and that she was "Stella." Sayers claimed he twisted reality to justify his own viewpoints and had the nerve to lift passages from letters she had written him. Raymond said, regardless of the fact, she personally felt the book might be helpful in understanding Dorothy. When she asserted, however, that Courmes was nothing like "Mac," Adairton Fleming, Dorothy's husband, a light came on in my head and I knew we were on the right track. We then agreed to meet again for lunch in a few days to discuss the book and what Raymond claimed was a very interesting aspect of Dorothy Sayers' background, which she felt might illuminate Dorothy's strange challenge to me. In the meantime, she encouraged me to check with all my other sources.

Thus, not only did I read Courmes' book, but I contacted Jeffries at CID and asked him to get me a run-down on John Courmes and "Mac." Jeffries had no

## Chapter 6

"in its severest form the mystery-story  
is a pure and analytical exercise"<sup>xxi</sup>

Before we parted for the evening, she gave me the two volume Cournos novel, *The Devil Is An English Gentleman*, and asked me to spend a day reading it. She said Dorothy had told her that Cournos' version of their relationship was described in Chapter 28 and that she was "Stella." Sayers claimed he twisted reality to justify his own viewpoints and had the nerve to lift passages from letters she had written him. Raymond said, regardless of the fact, she personally felt the book might be helpful in understanding Dorothy. When she asserted, however, that Cournos was nothing like "Mac," Atherton Fleming, Dorothy's husband, a light came on in my head and I knew we were on the right track. We then agreed to meet again for lunch in a few days to discuss the book and what Raymond claimed was a very interesting aspect of Dorothy Sayers' background, which she felt might illuminate Dorothy's strange challenge to me. In the meantime, she encouraged me to check with all my other sources.

Thus, not only did I read Cournos' book, but I contacted Jefferies at CID and asked him to get me a run-down on John Cournos and "Mac." Jefferies had no



knowledge of Cournos as a writer, but he agreed to run a quick check and ask around. As anticipated, he had found nothing on Katherine Lammas, but expected a great deal of information back in return about my meeting with Betty Raymond. I told him he would have to wait until the pieces were all in place but that both Raymond and I believed the mystery woman to be Dorothy L. Sayers herself playing out some kind of puzzle plot. I knew this would whet his appetite and keep him going.

When Jefferies called me back the following day with the low-down on John Cournos, I was only a little taken back. I had expected him to be as artistically unusual as Mac was commonly ordinary. Women like to go from one extreme to the other both in dress or fashion as well as men. However, my imagination could not have created the scenes the Cournos' book painted with an understanding but coarse brush. To his credit he presented (from his viewpoint) a compassionate picture of a mistakenly confused girl. He almost implied that were "Stella" to have had thinner ankles and calves and his hero, Richard, a fondness for "pillion riding" the couple might have had a chance. The pillion references were already outdated, as was his overdone "white capped, writhen sea" passage at the opening of the book. The whole book, like the main character, was a mixture of the Romantic with the 20's Avant Garde. The reference by Max that art was the opiate of the people was personally insulting. It was as though he was forecasting a future where the masses would mindlessly gaze at whatever was cast before them. Most of all I felt that if his goal was to humiliate Dorothy Sayers by exposing her shameless nudity before him and her wish to see his "manhood"; he could have done it without running off

into a commentary on Communism. When we met for lunch the next day, I questioned Betty Raymond about her friend's depiction and she didn't discount Cournos' presentation of the basic events.

"You have to understand, Bobby, that Dorothy had led a sheltered life romantically. Her girlhood romances were all imaginary, not with actual men. First she was the unrequited lover, Athos, then she fell in love with boys like "Dull Red,"<sup>xxii</sup> with whom she had no realistic chance of interacting. All through her school years, her lovers were fantasies such as the actors Lewis Waller and Baliol Holloway.<sup>xxiii</sup> When Cournos came along she was unprepared for dealing with a real man with real physical needs and expectations. She was repulsed by the falseness of "rubbers" because they brought her idealized love into the common world. That's why she settled for the naked love making romps with Cournos, without real consummation, that he describes in his book. Without the true final act she felt she was keeping their love on a purer if not totally higher plane."

"The guy must have *really* been unsettled to go along with such unfulfilling actions, in my opinion. And to write not only about the lovemaking but to publish passages from her letters almost verbatim is unbelievable!"

"Well, in fairness he was only retaliating. Dorothy had lashed out first by describing their relationship in *Strong Poison* through Philip Boyes and Harriet Vane. She believed Cournos when he said it was against his principles to marry, and when he did, he revealed himself as an empty theorist. Like Harriet Vane, Dorothy had been made a fool of."<sup>xxiv</sup>

"I wasn't aware of that situation. There is still a lot more I need to learn about her from you."

"Well someday, when she's gone, I plan to write a book," she laughed, "You can find out all you want *then*."

"I probably know too much now but I still don't have a clue as to what the game is all about." I replied sourly.

"I've a theory but you must promise me you won't take anything I have or will tell you public. What we talk about can go no further than the two of us and perhaps Dorothy, if she pulls it out of you." Her eyes were steely serious and her jaw was clenched in honesty.

"There's no problem there. I'll give Jefferies some commonly known facts, a harmless tidbit, and say the whole thing came to naught. So what's her game?"

"You know how I feel about her failure with Cournos and why I think she made a bungle of the whole affair. It's not all her fault, but her reaction to the falling out is. Strictly between you and me, and it *mustn't* go farther: The last part of Cournos' story is partially true. She did have a follow-up affair with a young man, seemingly to spite Cournos and the world; it may or may not have had anything to do with "awakening the woman" inside her, but she let herself go completely and she became pregnant." My face must have confirmed my speechlessness for she went on after a pause. "For all her complaining to Cournos that she wouldn't have sex with him wearing rubbers because she wanted to marry him, she went off and had sex with a man she had no interest in marrying and had him *use* rubbers. As if the Gods were punishing her perversity of logic, she ended up with a child she didn't



want from a man she didn't want. And the man she wanted to have children with, but who professed he didn't want children or marriage, goes off to America and gets married!"

If not for the look on her face, I would have replied with the customary "You've got to be kidding," excuse the pun. There was no reply worthy of utterance; I leaned back in my chair and let out a deep breath.

"So Bobby, I'm going to go out on a limb here and give you the only explanation I can think of to explain what Dorothy is up to. She hasn't told anyone other than Cournos and, of course, Ivy Shrimpton, her cousin, who is raising the child, who the child's parents are and then she did so only after a considerable time had passed. Her parents never even knew she was pregnant! Her best friends have no idea. I only figured out the situation after a year of being around Dorothy in the presence of Ivy and the child and doing some detective work on my own. It was mostly intuition. I read Cournos' book after picking up several clues she inadvertently let slip and then questioned her on it. At first she was furious and denied it but now she is scared that others might make a connection. You must tell no one! Although Dorothy's father and mother have passed away, she has curtailed the minor contact she has had with the child even more now that he is older and I have discovered the secret. But there is talk of Cournos publishing a new book and he is in America. I believe she sent Mac out to find an *American* detective who wouldn't go through standard English channels or sources but who would work alone or possibly, as in your case with American intelligence. She set you about looking into her writing to see if you would discover the existence of the child and perhaps if Cournos is

planning any more spiteful revelations in his book being printed in America. She made the mistake of revealing too much in her letters to him. She hasn't heard from him for years and now she wants to know what the other side is thinking. Her guilt and curiosity may be over-riding her caution. It is a common plot device in detective fiction, so I may not be giving her enough credit, but it is the best I can come up with on this short notice."

"Wow, that's quite a stretch, but there is a plausibility that I can't deny. Admittedly I haven't come up with anything better and I was planning on trying to bluff my way and smoke her out in the final confrontation, which I think is another common plot device, but I honestly haven't read much of the genre' until now. You needn't worry about my keeping it a secret, but if you are so concerned why tell me at all?"

"As I said, I don't think Dorothy has handled the situation well and I don't want to see her or the child hurt. If I am right, I think she took a big chance on you. What if you don't find out about the child, as you didn't, but stir up enough questions that somebody else does? Or what if Cournos *wasn't* planning anything but finds out how much it would upset Dorothy and *then* he acts?"

"I wonder if it isn't just another one of her puzzles? What if Dorothy had enough confidence in me to locate you? And enough understanding of your compassion and ability to get me to do something that she herself could never bring herself to discuss, let alone plead for? Maybe the CID check on Cournos *is* her goal, but I would have never run it without *your* lead."

"Now *that's* an interesting conclusion. So what are you going to do Bobby?"

"I'm going to try to smoke out the lady, as I planned, but come what may, if asked I'm going to deny I know about anything other than what comes from a critical reading of *Gaudy Night* and some basic biographical facts. Cournos' book isn't what you'd call a best seller. Other than us, who is going to read it? And there doesn't seem to be any known connection between Dorothy Sayers and Cournos in the literary circles let alone the general public. I can convince Jefferies it was a dead end and put him on another search that's a false trail. In short, the kid's secret is safe with Bobby Mulligan." I rose to go and she put her hand on mine.

"Thanks Bobby, you're a good ... sport!"

Never before had I sat in my alcove at Rafferty's with such anticipation. I got there earlier than normal and considerably ahead of the appointed time. For once I was alive and attuned to all the chatter and activity around me. Finally, I recognized both the life that this place held and the myriad of personalities within it who each had a complete world of their own beyond mine. Suddenly, there were more difficult and complex problems than mine, and my personal misgivings melted into the Smithwick's in my hand. Like the limitations of reading a narrow genre of novels, I understood there was a life beyond the one I had been living.

This time I saw her enter and cross the room towards me. Maybe the light wasn't any brighter, but it seemed so. Her stride was confident and quick with no hesitation. She sat as before but this time I discerned a pair of small rimless glasses and a hint of rouge on the chubby cheeks. Her silver hair was obviously an outdated wig. Noticing the little "Fresh Showers" pin in her lapel, I didn't hesitate to order a



## Chapter 7

I dramatised myself, and have at all periods of my life continued to dramatise myself into a great number of egotistical impersonations of a very common type, making myself the heroine (or more often the hero) of countless dramatic situations-but at all times with a perfect realization that I was the creator, not the subject, of these fantasies. <sup>xxv</sup>

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This time I saw her enter and cross the room towards me. Maybe the light wasn't any brighter, but it seemed so. Her stride was confident and quick with no hesitation. She sat as before but this time I discerned a pair of small rimless glasses and a hint of rouge on the chubby cheeks. Her silver hair was obviously an outdated wig. Noticing the little "Froth Blowers" pin in her lapel, I didn't hesitate to order a

couple of beers. Dorothy seemed amused at my suggestion of a Guinness for her health. As before, she wasted no time and got right to the point:

"Well, have you located my husband?"

"The last I heard, Peter Wimsey was on honeymoon."

"And what about Katherine Lammas? Is he in love with her?"

"I believe he loves her no more nor no less than he loves you, ... Miss Sayers."

She chuckled and the mischievous smile burst out this time. "So far you haven't disappointed me. You once asked me what I knew about you. Now it's your turn."

I gave her the literary run down and downplayed Betty Raymond as much as possible without blowing my credibility. She questioned me not on the facts but on my procedures and process. She wanted to know how I proceeded, like my progression of thinking about words, letters, and meaning but she didn't really want to hear about my theories on *Gaudy Night*. I was sure I hit close to home and decided to press her on a few points. She finally let her guard down and I struck paydirt.

"Yes, finances were always foremost. That came through in *Gaudy*. I once wrote to my mother that I had to live beyond my income for a bit- or rather accept her offer of a larger allowance, which I didn't want to do- I mean, I didn't want to on the principle that one ought to get one's living wage-not because I wanted to be pence-proud and independent.<sup>xxvi</sup> It was humiliating but I had to do it. Do you understand?"

"Yes, I think I do. And your work ethic is very common to those of us from the American Midwest. We too don't think much of the "pence-proud" as you call



them. But what about the lack of work, the inability to have both a paying job and be a scholar. Your parents were very supportive. What about that choice?"

"They were wonderful and I hope I understand how fortunate I was. There was guilt of course, as I told Mother, I simply loathe spending such an awful lot of money and making none- it gets to be a kind of nightmare especially in the morning- a damnable feeling of being no earthly use to anyone."<sup>xxvii</sup>

"You didn't always get the support to be an artist however, outside the home I take it?"

"That's putting it mildly. I remember writing to Catherine Godfrey from school and telling her I had to start to work on a epic- and an instructor said: 'What on earth do you want to do that for? Nobody wants to read epics.' So I felt crushed and took my epic elsewhere."<sup>xxviii</sup> Oh, and then there was the matter of my becoming an actress. After all the wonderful plays we did, I hated to write home to tell mother that 'I have been talking to all sorts of people lately about my chance of doing anything on the Stage — amongst others, Miss Bagnall and Miss Douglas — Miss D thinks I should not be any good. Miss Bagnall thinks I might, but both agree that I'd better not do anything about it till I leave college, so there is no fear of anything happening for another four years at least. Miss Douglas rather thinks I should probably be a greater success as a dramatist than as an actor."<sup>xxix</sup> Maybe they were right, but at the time it was the cruelest thing."

"I can imagine that writing about Lord Peter was a convenient outlet for both your frustrations and your dreams. Did he become a sort of internal knight in shining armor?"



"Not at all, I once said that one reason why I am so keen about Lord Peter is that writing him keeps my mind thoroughly occupied, and prevents me from wanting too badly the kind of life I do want, and see no chance of getting.<sup>xxx</sup> But now I think I was partially wrong, Lord Peter has allowed me to have the kind of life now that I do want."

"So he *has* become a monetary means to an end, after all. The kind of book Harriet had to write and not switch from until she made enough money to chuck it all. Doesn't that just support your Miss Douglas and Miss Bagnall's theories?"

"I would like to think not. I hope that Miss de Vine is a better teacher and she is right when she says: If you are once sure what you want to do, you find that everything else goes down before it like grass under a steamroller – all other interests, your own and other people's."<sup>xxxi</sup>

"Well, it sounds like kinder if not better advice to me." I said, as I lifted my glass and finished the last of my Smithwicks. Dorothy had finished off her Guinness much earlier. "I still am not sure what you wanted or if I have earned my fee. This has been another mystery without a murder. Unless of course, I could charge Dorothy L. Sayers with killing off Lord Peter and his wife, the former Harriet Vane?"

"You might, but we have already determined that money would not be a motive for me. Maybe someday you can pin it on Katherine Lammas. In any event, I think I have learned what I wanted to know."

"And what is that?"

"Let's just say that once I stopped writing him, Lord Peter did die and I had to find the guilty party. And, out of vanity, I wanted to know if people still knew who he was."

"Well, you wouldn't need to pay me £500 to find that out."

"I made a good choice after all, you are *thoroughly* persistent" she replied.

"Perhaps, I just can't stop creating puzzles and needed to dust the cobwebs out of my brain. Or maybe it's that frustrated actress you thought Miss Douglas killed, coming back to life for one last curtain call before fading off into academia. It doesn't matter. That is unless there is something you've turned up that you haven't told me?"

It was my turn to sport the mischievous smile and after a dramatic pause reply:

"There's nothing more I found out and there is nothing more anyone else will find. After all, as you said I'm thoroughly persistent. Tell Mac, I regret not meeting him the last time he was in, next time I'll buy him a pint."

As if in 'one-up-manship,' she pushed her chair backward and countered with, "He's probably home reading LIFE. You should keep an eye on that magazine. You never know what will turn up."

When she rose this time I followed her and I wasn't blinded by the light, but I was struck by her poise as she cut through the smoky cloud on our way to the door. She seemed quite at home in the pub and not as you would expect a successful English writer.



Outside, she turned, extended her hand, and simply said, "I hope to read a book someday by Bobby Mulligan. Good Luck."

"And I plan to make your hope a reality." I replied as I shook her hand and bowed slightly with my shoulders and head. She headed East into the London mist and I headed West. I never went back to Rafferty's and it has made all the difference.

- <sup>173</sup> Barbara Reynolds, *Dorothy L. Sayers: Her Life and Soul*, 173.
- <sup>174</sup> Reynolds, Barbara, *Dorothy L. Sayers: Her Life and Soul*, 4, 90, 98, 235.
- <sup>175</sup> Sayers, Dorothy L., *Gaudy Night*, New York: Harper Collins, 1995 18.
- <sup>176</sup> Reynolds, Barbara, *Dorothy L. Sayers: Her Life and Soul*, 3.
- <sup>177</sup> Reynolds, Barbara, *Dorothy L. Sayers: Her Life and Soul*, 21.
- <sup>178</sup> Reynolds, Barbara, *Dorothy L. Sayers: Her Life and Soul*, 37.
- <sup>179</sup> Reynolds, Barbara, *Dorothy L. Sayers: Her Life and Soul*, 63.
- <sup>180</sup> Reynolds, Barbara, *Dorothy L. Sayers: Her Life and Soul*, 103.
- <sup>181</sup> Reynolds, Barbara, *Dorothy L. Sayers: Her Life and Soul*, 206.
- <sup>182</sup> Sayers, Dorothy L., *Gaudy Night*, New York: Harper Collins, 1995 332.
- <sup>183</sup> Sayers, Dorothy L., *Gaudy Night*, New York: Harper Collins, 1995 333.
- <sup>184</sup> Sayers's body was mostly completed well before *Gaudy Night* was finished.
- <sup>185</sup> Reynolds, Barbara, *Dorothy L. Sayers: Her Life and Soul*, 263.
- <sup>186</sup> Sayers, Dorothy L., *The Lovers of Dorothy L. Sayers*, vol. 1 1899-1936: *The Making of a Detective Novelist*, Ed. Barbara Reynolds, 2.
- <sup>187</sup> Sayers, Dorothy L., *The Lovers of Dorothy L. Sayers*, vol. 1 1899-1936: *The Making of a Detective Novelist*, Ed. Barbara Reynolds, 14.
- <sup>188</sup> Reynolds, Barbara, *Dorothy L. Sayers: Her Life and Soul*, 113 & 131.
- <sup>189</sup> Reynolds, Barbara, *Dorothy L. Sayers: Her Life and Soul*, 18.
- <sup>190</sup> Sayers, Dorothy L., *The Lovers of Dorothy L. Sayers*, vol. 1 1899-1936: *The Making of a Detective Novelist*, Ed. Barbara Reynolds, 135.
- <sup>191</sup> Sayers, Dorothy L., *The Lovers of Dorothy L. Sayers*, vol. 1 1899-1936: *The Making of a Detective Novelist*, Ed. Barbara Reynolds, 77.
- <sup>192</sup> Sayers, Dorothy L., *The Lovers of Dorothy L. Sayers*, vol. 1 1899-1936: *The Making of a Detective Novelist*, Ed. Barbara Reynolds, 45.
- <sup>193</sup> Reynolds, Barbara, *Dorothy L. Sayers: Her Life and Soul*, 104.
- <sup>194</sup> Sayers, Dorothy L., *Gaudy Night*, New York: Harper Collins, 1995.



## NOTES

- <sup>i</sup> Dorothy Sayers, "Gaudy Night," *The Art of the Mystery Story: A collection of Critical Essays*.
- <sup>ii</sup> Barbara Reynolds, *Dorothy L. Sayers: Her Life and Soul*, 370.
- <sup>iii</sup> David Coomes, *Dorothy L. Sayers: A Careless Rage for Life* (26)
- <sup>iv</sup> London: Privately printed for the Family by Humphrey Milford, 1936.
- <sup>v</sup> Dorothy Sayers, "Gaudy Night" *The Art of the Mystery Story: A collection of Critical Essays*.
- <sup>vi</sup> Dorothy Sayers, "Gaudy Night" *The Art of the Mystery Story: A collection of Critical Essays*.
- <sup>vii</sup> Dorothy Sayers, "Gaudy Night" *The Art of the Mystery Story: A collection of Critical Essays*.
- <sup>viii</sup> Sayers, Dorothy L. *The Letters of Dorothy L. Sayers*. vol. 1 1899-1936: *The Making of a Detective Novelist*. Ed. Barbara Reynolds. 173.
- <sup>ix</sup> Barbara Reynolds, *Dorothy L. Sayers: Her Life and Soul*, 28 & 175.
- <sup>x</sup> Reynolds, Barbara. *Dorothy L. Sayers: Her Life and Soul*. 6, 90, 98, 255.
- <sup>xi</sup> Sayers, Dorothy L. *Gaudy Night*. New York: Harper Collins, 1995 18.
- <sup>xii</sup> Reynolds, Barbara. *Dorothy L. Sayers: Her Life and Soul*. 3.
- <sup>xiii</sup> Reynolds, Barbara. *Dorothy L. Sayers: Her Life and Soul*. 21.
- <sup>xiv</sup> Reynolds, Barbara. *Dorothy L. Sayers: Her Life and Soul*. 37.
- <sup>xv</sup> Reynolds, Barbara. *Dorothy L. Sayers: Her Life and Soul*. 63.
- <sup>xvi</sup> Reynolds, Barbara. *Dorothy L. Sayers: Her Life and Soul*. 103.
- <sup>xvii</sup> Reynolds, Barbara. *Dorothy L. Sayers: Her Life and Soul*. 206.
- <sup>xviii</sup> Sayers, Dorothy L. *Gaudy Night*. New York: Harper Collins, 1995 332.
- <sup>xix</sup> Sayers, Dorothy L. *Gaudy Night*. New York: Harper Collins, 1995 333.
- <sup>xx</sup> Busman's holiday was mostly completed well before Gaudy Night was finished.  
Reynolds, Barbara. *Dorothy L. Sayers: Her Life and Soul*. 263.
- <sup>xxi</sup> Sayers, Dorothy L. "Introduction." *The Ominibus of Crime*. 9-47.
- <sup>xxii</sup> Sayers, Dorothy L. *The Letters of Dorothy L. Sayers*. vol. 1 1899-1936: *The Making of a Detective Novelist*. Ed. Barbara Reynolds. 8.
- <sup>xxiii</sup> Sayers, Dorothy L. *The Letters of Dorothy L. Sayers*. vol. 1 1899-1936: *The Making of a Detective Novelist*. Ed. 34.
- <sup>xxiv</sup> Reynolds, Barbara. *Dorothy L. Sayers: Her Life and Soul*. 113 & 131.
- <sup>xxv</sup> Reynolds, Barbara. *Dorothy L. Sayers: Her Life and Soul*. 18.
- <sup>xxvi</sup> Sayers, Dorothy L. *The Letters of Dorothy L. Sayers*. vol. 1 1899-1936: *The Making of a Detective Novelist*. Ed. Barbara Reynolds. 135.
- <sup>xxvii</sup> Sayers, Dorothy L. *The Letters of Dorothy L. Sayers*. vol. 1 1899-1936: *The Making of a Detective Novelist*. Ed. Barbara Reynolds. 153.
- <sup>xxviii</sup> Sayers, Dorothy L. *The Letters of Dorothy L. Sayers*. vol. 1 1899-1936: *The Making of a Detective Novelist*. Ed. Barbara Reynolds. 77.
- <sup>xxix</sup> Sayers, Dorothy L. *The Letters of Dorothy L. Sayers*. vol. 1 1899-1936: *The Making of a Detective Novelist*. Ed. Barbara Reynolds. 49.
- <sup>xxx</sup> Reynolds, Barbara. *Dorothy L. Sayers: Her Life and Soul*. 104.
- <sup>xxxi</sup> Sayers, Dorothy L. *Gaudy Night*. New York: Harper Collins, 1995.

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